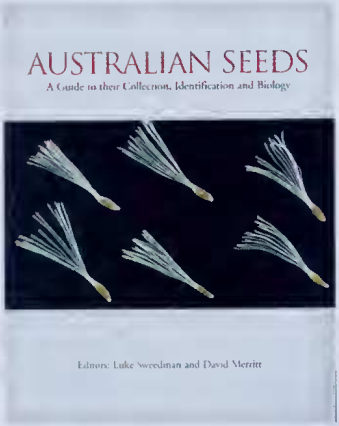
Australian Seeds: A Guide to their Collection, Identification and Biology



edited by Luke Sweedman and David Merritt

Publisher: *CSIRO Publishing, 2006. 258 pages, paper back, colour photos, ISBN 0643092986. RRP $69.95*

Australia is going through perhaps the most important phases of land rehabilitation and landcare in its 200 years of European occupation. This is a timely book that addresses most aspects of Australian native plant seed.

Seed is the most important component in any revegetation project and plant nursery seedling production.

A publication that has sound and relevant information towards helping practitioners and researchers in this field is a welcome addition to the many books now available.

Australian Seeds: A Guide to their Collection, Identification and Biology, is an excellent textbook following on from an earlier work, also published by CSIRO researchers.

Until the last decade many rehabilitation and revegetation works in most Australian states were carried out in a somewhat *ad hoc* manner, although with good intention. One of the main concerns was that people using Australian native plant seed lacked knowledge and understanding of the germination cues required.

With this book comes a wealth of knowledge that will help address this and achieve better outcomes in land rehabilitation projects that help to put back floristic foundations into the Australian landscape.

Those of us involved with native plant seeds are always keen to read up-to-date literature on new techniques in the understanding of breaking seed dormancy, particularly for understorey species, and other related native plant seed biology. The effect of fire and smoke on seed is of importance for many plant genera.

Western Australia, which has some of Australia's if not the world's unique flora, has been a leader in floristic research on the many facets of native seed and is an ideal base for such work to be published in book form.

All chapters are thoroughly researched and are of considerable interest. These include Seeds through time; Seed and fruit structure; Seed biology and ecology; Seed collection, drying, cleaning and storage. An excellent chapter on seed collection guidelines for common Australian plant families and genera is of interest as many of these can be found in other states.

This book is complemented by the excellent photography of some 1400 different species of seed in natural colour and size. This alone is worth the price of the book.

While this book is titled *Australian Seeds*, most photographs of seeds are from the western side of the nation.

Although other states have made good progress in this field with native seed related books and papers, this book has set the national bench mark. It is hoped that other states may embrace similar models in the years ahead.

Australian Seeds is an excellent work, a credit to all contributors. This book will be a welcome addition to the literature, a must for all researchers, plant nursery propagators and revegetation practitioners.

Neville B Bonney
Native Seed Practitioner,
Box 37, Tantanoola
South Australia 5280